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ORGANISE!

for class struggle anarchism

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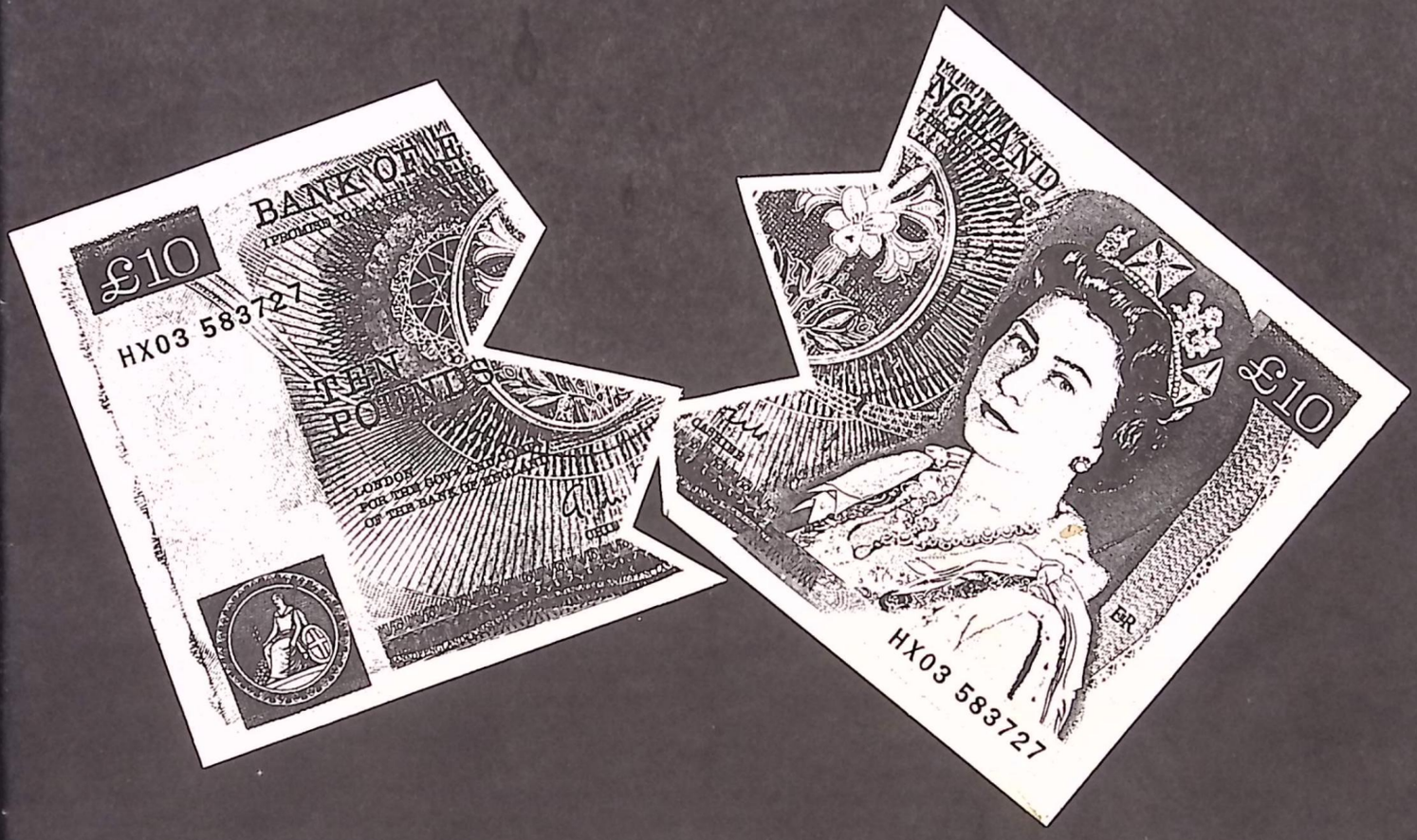
Oct-Dec
1992
Issue 28

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY
It's a rich man's world



INSIDE:

Earth Summit, Recession, Black Nationalism, Fascism, Detective Fiction, And Much More!

Magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation

ORGANISE!

ORGANISE! IS THE national magazine of the Anarchist Communist Federation (ACF). *Organise!* is a quarterly theoretical journal published in order to develop anarchist communist ideas. It aims to give a clear anarchist viewpoint on contemporary issues, and initiate debates on areas not normally covered by agitational journals.

All articles in the magazine are by ACF members unless signed. Some reflect ACF policy and others open up debate in undiscussed areas, helping us to develop our ideas further.

Please feel welcome to contribute articles to *Organise!* — as long as they don't conflict with our Aims and Principles we will publish them. (Letters, of course, need not agree with our A&Ps at all.)

Deadlines for next issue are 20th November for features and reviews, and 27th November for letters and news.

All contributions for the next issue should be sent to:
ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX

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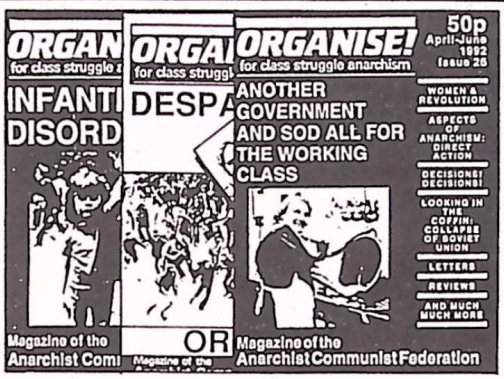
PRESS FUND

THE PRESS FUND exists so you can contribute to the everyday running and production costs of *Organise!* Money is always needed for printing, postage, layout materials and a host of other things. We also want to see *Organise!* produced more frequently, with more pages and with a greater print run. Money is also needed to finance more pamphlets.

Thanks to all those who contributed to the Press Fund this issue:

£50, Portsmouth ACF benefit; £150, London; £10, Bristol; £15, Stoke; £6, Camberley; £1.50, West Midland, £60+, Sheffield.



Who We Are ...

THE ANARCHIST COMMUNIST Federation is an organisation of class struggle anarchists. Its structure is based on groups and individual members. We have members in the following areas:

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The ACF promotes the building of a strong and active anarchist movement in Britain and internationally and has contact with like-minded anarchists overseas.

For all contact write to:
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HELP *ORGANISE!* TO GROW

WE THINK THAT *Organise!* has an important role to play in the growth of a real revolutionary movement. We know from rising sales that many of our readers feel the same.

But we need your support to help keep the furnace burning.

Sell *Organise!*

Although our sales are rising, we still need to keep on boosting our circulation, so try and take a bundle to sell to friends or workmates. By selling *Organise!* you can help our ideas to reach more and more people.

Write for *Organise!*

You can help to make *Organise!* yours by writing letters and articles.

Feedback

Organise! will improve through a two-way process of criticism and feedback, and will better reflect the reality of struggle through readers communicating with us. Please write in with your ideas.

Please send all feedback, contributions for *Organise!*, requests for papers and Press Fund money (payable to ACF) to the London address.

Organise! Back Issues

BACK ISSUES OF *Organise!* (from issue 14 to issue 27 inclusive) are still available, from the London group address, as are a few copies of its forerunner *Virus*. They cost 40p & sae each and include:

- *Organise!* 21: Gulf war; Russia in crisis; Brixton.
- *Organise!* 22: Recession; poll tax; warfare state; Commune; Asia.
- *Organise!* 23: Iraq Interview; Greens; ANC; pits; police
- *Organise!* 24: New World Order; Children; BCCI; Clause 25.
- *Organise!* 25: Columbus; Freedom; SWP; Filipino Interview
- *Organise!* 26: Women & Revolution; Direct action; US Greens.
- *Organise!* 27: LA Riots; Yugoslavia; Malcolm X.

Ermmm... what is ERM?

THE RECENT PANIC over the pound and the accompanying cries of doom are yet another example of the absurdity of the system we live in.

Most people probably have no idea what's going on and see the value of the pound as a sign of the country's virility. On a more basic level, the fall of the pound makes people think of higher interest and mortgage rates and a deeper recession with more job losses. We are made to feel helpless against the power of the economy, accepting sacrifices as inevitable. This helplessness is aggravated by the veil which hides the working of the economic system. People do not actually understand what has happened and why. We just wait to see the consequences for our own lives, leaving the government to sort it out for us.

So what actually did happen? Joining the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) meant that Britain had to keep the pound at a certain level compared to the strongest currency in the system — the German Mark. If fewer people wanted to buy pounds to buy British goods or to invest in British banks, then the value of the pound would fall. To keep the pound at a high value, and in line with the Mark, the British state treasury would have to intervene and buy pounds with its own reserves — or the government could put interest rates up to try to get the capitalists and speculators to buy pounds.

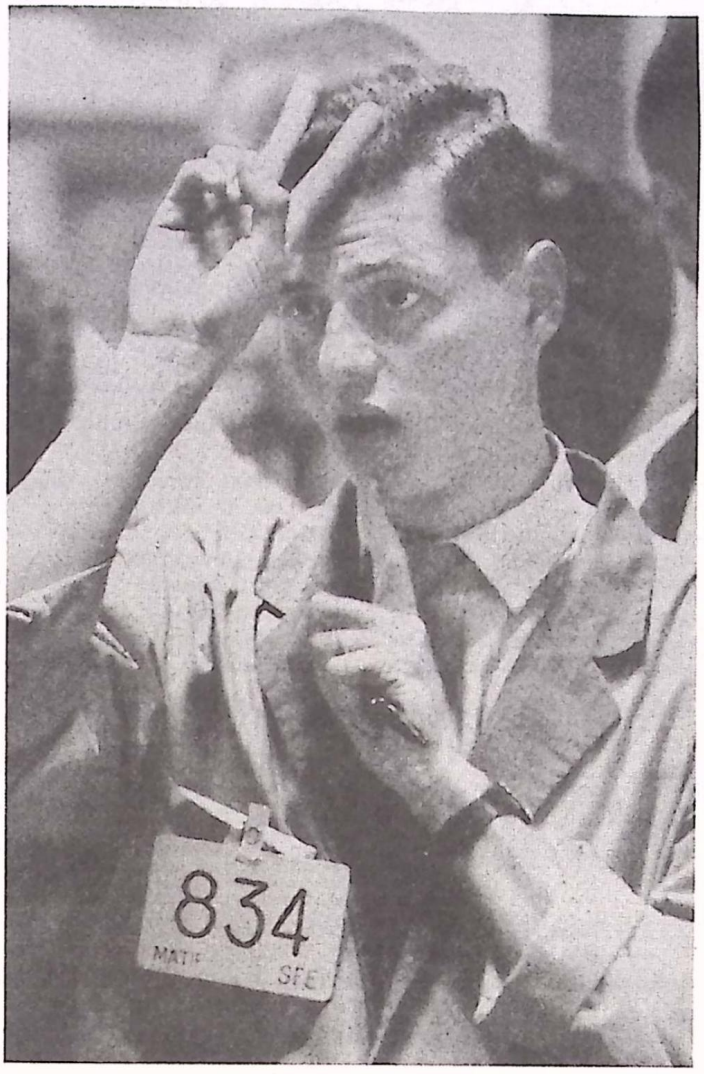
The latter route would mean that businesses would have to pay more on their loans and house buyers would have more to pay on their mortgages. Some businesses might collapse, others might stop expanding, leading to increased unemployment. Fewer houses would be bought so workers in that area, eg the building trade, would lose jobs. Also, a high value on the pound would make British goods appear more expensive so the export industries would be in trouble.

So despite all the problems caused by a high pound, the government followed this policy for two reasons. One, high interest rates and a strong pound attract money into the City of London — which is a massive influence on any government and has often dictated policy. Secondly, the Conservatives have always made inflation their main target, even if this has meant unemployment and industrial collapse. By keeping the pound high, imports would become cheaper, costs to firms would be held down and the prices in the shops would not rise so much. The government did succeed in keeping the inflation rate low, but at the cost of a massive rise in unemployment. Even the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) was calling for lower interest rates, even if it meant a fall in the value of the pound.

Falling pound

The pound did fall, drastically, but against the government's wishes. If Britain had been a strong economy with British exports being bought and investors thinking they could make money here, then the pound would not have fallen. But since we live in a capitalist economy, if no one wants to buy something (in this case pounds) then the price of it falls.

But things are even more complicated. Only about 10% of pounds are bought because people want to buy products in Britain. The vast amount of currency bought and sold is done by currency speculators who buy a currency at a low level and sell at a higher level — thereby pocketing the profit and making a killing. Therefore, though Britain's exports and industries do not attract much money, the crisis was bought about by speculators who sensed the pound was weak and got rid of their pounds while the value was still higher. With billions of dollars at their disposal the money sharks of the world's finance centres were able to shrug off the Bank of England's £40 billion intervention. These were minor compared to the resources of the world currency markets who do nothing but shift money around and make yet more of it for the rich bastards who can afford a speculative lifestyle.



Mixed signals... A French trader joins the bidding as the future of the ERM hangs in the balance.

Hardship

People of many political tendencies would agree with the above description of events. The difference is that as anarchist communists we have a totally different view as to what should be done. In the next few months, political parties will come up with various proposals. The Thatcherites will shout that they were right — you cannot "buck the market". If the 'market' wants to sell pounds, it will do so. You just have to let things be, accepting the consequences, no matter what hardship this entails. They are supported by their friends in the City who have made and will continue to make a lot of money out of others suffering.

The CBI, representing British industry, will take a slightly different tack. They will want lower interest rates, a lower pound so that they can increase exports, and also help from the government. Even the bosses of industry realise that they can't make profits if the majority are too poor to buy anything. But, as always, it is not the interests of the working class they have at heart. The bosses will be at the forefront of calls to keep wage increases well below the inflation rate.

Others, both from the left

mittees failed to take a principled position on the question of the entry of Spanish anarchists into the Catalan government and then the national Republican government,and the lack of opposition to the militarisation of the militias into a 'popular army'.

Naive

Similarly Faucier and Lecoin jointly edited a leaflet *Immediate Peace* at the outbreak of war in 1939. This leaflet naively demanded of both sides an immediate peace, but failed to mention the problems of social change, class struggle and fascism. Faucier was sent to prison for three years for draft resistance, escaping to live underground up till the Liberation.

After the War, Faucier was involved in several anti-militarist committees. He remained friends with Lecoin, and this may have compromised him in his relationship with the post-war Federation Communiste Libertaire, basing itself on the need for class analysis and a structured organisation. Whilst Faucier remained a Platformist, he never joined the FCL, preferring to remain a sympathiser.

China

Spending his last days in St Nazaire he was active in 1989 in the local group, **Collective Against Repression in China**. Up to the end he was active, in January 1991 working around the opposition to the Gulf War. As he stated in the local paper, celebrating his 90th birthday, "I will struggle right up to my last breath".

Despite his devotion to class struggle anarchism and a structured organisation, Faucier was too willing to collaborate with the synthesists, which led to continuing problems for the revolutionary anarchist movement. He preferred to put anti-militarist work before the creation of a specific anarchist communist organisation.

The French movement is still suffering from these errors, and Faucier's own life illustrates the failure of the pre-war anarchist communists in France, and indeed the superficiality of most of the French 'platformism', in comparison to the core ideas of the Platform itself.

The Rostock Riots

THE REUNIFICATION OF Germany brought with it a crisis for the groups of the extreme right. They had lost one of their main themes — the reconstitution of a Greater Germany. But they quickly regained their momentum with a new theme — refugees. The 'Republicans' and other groups began to grow in numbers. Kohl and the Christian Democrats threw oil on the fire by making the 'problem' of refugees one of their preoccupations. Before the collapse of the Wall, extreme right parties had regularly risen and collapsed, never to be heard from again. In the '60s, the NPD (German National Party) had a certain amount of success, soon to be forgotten. Now the Republican Party looks like gaining seats in the Bundestag in 1994. But they are very badly organised and at the moment lack the political personnel necessary for long-term survival.

The East

The neo-Nazi and fascist phenomenon in east Germany was not something new, despite the protests of the old Communist regime. From the start of the '80s, skinheads subscribing to Nazi ideas were to be seen in the East. The regime refused to take any of their attacks seriously, as they were much in love with the idea of the 'glorious' youth produced by Communism! This ended in 1987 with a serious attack on a punk concert in East Berlin. From then on, the regime could not ignore the problem. The fascist skinhead phenomenon was a home-grown one, produced under East German conditions. The regime refused to accept this, claiming that the movement was directed from West Germany. There was a mass round-up of skinheads, many of whom were imprisoned. In prison they developed their contacts with each other and developed a thorough-going extreme right ideology. When East Germany imploded, they came out of prison determined to organise and to create a party.

When the extreme right parties of West Germany sent their disciples to the East they were able to make contact with these people.

Rostock

The riots at Rostock were not orchestrated by the West German extreme right. It was the youth of the town who started the attacks on the refugees' hostel. The West German neo-nazis arrived after the first violence. One neo-Nazi leader from Munich, another from Hamburg were to be seen in the crowd. But the phenomenon of Rostock was a phenomenon of East Germany. There had been no group or party of the extreme right organised at Rostock for the last few years.

On the other hand, the extreme right organisation Deutsche Alternative founded in West Germany in 1989, has been able to put down roots in East Germany in particular at Cottbus, where sporadic riots followed those of Rostock. This organisation pushes the line that what was East Germany is being led by the nose by West Germany, which has proved to have a certain popularity amongst the East German youth. It has a number of East Germans in its leadership.

The neo-Nazi groups will attempt to take full advantage of the unrest in the East. Rostock was an important ship-building town and dock. The reintegration of Germany caused enormous problems for these industries and thousands were made unemployed. This scenario has been repeated all over the East. After years of state capitalism and the lack of a revolutionary alternative, some elements in the East German working class, especially amongst young people are being attracted by racist and fascist ideas. The flames are being fanned by the Christian Democrats for their own ends, and the Social-Democrats are going along with their game.

As for the Greens, they have shown themselves to be split and confused over the issue of refugees. As for the autonomists, the Autonomen, whilst they attempted to mobilise against racist attacks, their deliberate self-marginalisation has not helped them relate to ordinary working class people.

The vacuum created by the collapse of the Stalinist regime in East Germany followed by lay-offs and redundancies on a large scale has given the neo-Nazis an opportunity to extend their influence. Whether the revolutionary movement can respond to this challenge, and more importantly, whether there will be a working class offensive against the bosses attacks, will determine how long-term their success will be. As we noted in *Organise!* 27 the German working class in the West has mobilised on a massive scale. An upsurge in working class militancy would short-circuit the plans of the neo-Nazis.

P.S. We are not implying that all German skinheads are neo-Nazis. A large number of skinheads marched through Lubeck earlier in the year in a 'skinhead demonstration against racism'. They came from all over Germany, both East and West, and wanted to show that all skinheads are not fascists.

Meet the ACF

Come and talk to us at:

ACF bookstall, Anarchist Bookfair
October 17th, Conway Hall, London.

ACF bookstall, Greenpeace Fayre
October 31st, Conway Hall, London.

London ACF Public Meeting
'Revolutionary Anarchism — The Way Forward'. October 22nd, Marchmont Centre, Marchmont St, London WC1 starting at 7.30 pm.

Bashing the fash?

FASCISM HAS LONG been the last resort of the ruling class — when the facade of liberal democracy can no longer control the working class, fascism is unleashed to secure the power of the bosses.

This was precisely the role fascism played when it first arose in 1920s Europe, ending hopes of revolution in many countries and ensuring capitalism could continue unchecked. Once more fascism is on the rise, especially in France and Germany. This has led to a stampede of left wing groups rushing to save the working class from this new menace.

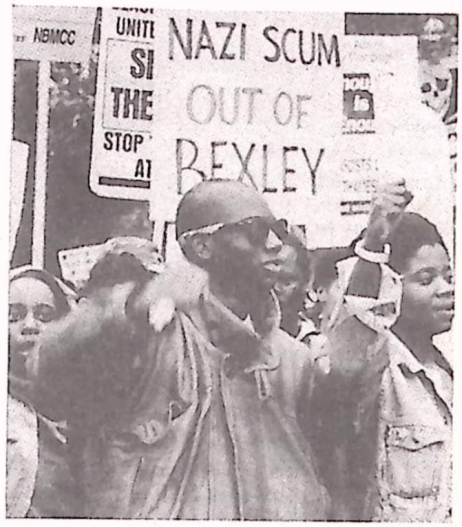
So what response can anarchist communists give to this situation? First an analysis of the far right and what threat they pose is needed.

In the press and on TV, pictures of rampaging young, German skinheads has become almost a daily occurrence. In the turmoil of reunified Germany thousands of people have turned to fascism, blaming immigrants for economic problems. A similar anti-immigrant policy has worked well for the **Front Nationale** of Le Pen in France. They have attracted a large amount of support by making immigrant workers the scapegoat for the current crisis of capitalism. However, in neither of these countries where the far right is at its strongest do the fascists look like seizing power. Instead, by putting forward radical right wing policies they have pushed the political agenda of the main stream parties to the right. Tough new anti-immigration laws are being brought in in France and Germany — not by the fascists but by the Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats. The fascists have helped the European capitalists with their plans for fortress Europe without the need for the upheaval a full scale fascist takeover would entail. The fascist mobilisations and attacks on immigrants has enabled the boss class to strengthen the walls of Fortress Europe. In addition, in France Mitterand has used the **Front Nationale** to weaken the vote given to the parties of the centre right and Gaullism and to cling to power.

Neo-Nazis

In Germany, the neo-Nazis were allowed by the police to terrorise immigrants. After the last World War, the Western powers imposed a constitution on Germany, which was far more liberal towards refugees than other countries in Europe. Now with the orchestrated campaign against immigrants, the parties of the establishment can demand tougher laws and restrictions against immigration. The **Social Democratic Party** (SDP) leadership is backing a restriction of Article 16 of the Constitution, which allows all asylum seekers a haven in Germany. Only 'real' victims of political persecution would be allowed to have asylum, if the law change came about. In the ranks of the Greens there is talk about restricting entry to immigrants.

The British fascists, mainly represented by the **British National Party** (BNP) have done rather less well than their fellow continental scum. Most of the credit for this must go to the Conservative government! British immigration laws were already the strictest in Europe, and the Thatcher regime stole some of the racist rhetoric of the fascists. The ruling class simply did not need a strong fascist presence here to keep things running smoothly.



So where does this leave anti-fascism?

As fascism, like liberal democracy, is just an aspect of capitalism, any attacks on fascism must be anti-capitalist as to support liberal democracy in attacking fascism, will leave the root cause, capitalism, undamaged.

Sadly, the various anti-fascist groups set up in this country are all to varying degrees cross-class movements. The **AntiRacist Alliance** is made up of sections of the trade union bureaucracy, old Stalinists and MPs from both the Labour and Tory parties — it's obvious, they're all on the same side, and it's equally obvious they'll never stop the fascists!

The recently relaunched **Anti Nazi League** is a very flimsy front for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and is obviously not concerned with fighting fascism or capitalism. In some areas the local ANL is just the local SWP branch with different hats on! The ANL makes continued reference to all fascists as 'Nazi'. In doing so they perpetuate the myth of the 'anti-fascist' war against the Axis powers, and can mobilise on a broad 'anti-Nazi' basis so that supporters and admirers of capitalism can be drawn in. This was the case in the '70s when the ANL drew in all manner of celebrities with its various cricketers, footballers etc, etc, Against the Nazis. The ANL is merely a recruiting front for the SWP. They desperately need new party fodder to pay their dues and support the SWP bureaucracy of the full-time party officials. The ANL is not prepared to mobilise physically against fascists and racists. It is not prepared to point the finger at the system that created fascism in the first place.

Militant have also got into the act with YAR (Youth against Racism) and various smaller Trotskyist groups have launched their own anti-fascist grouplets.

Physical

The one anti-fascist group that appears to have some promise is **Anti-Fascist Action** (AFA). Their commitment to actual physical confrontation with fascists makes them much more appealing than the groups content to chant at the fascists from behind police lines. AFA also has as its guiding principle the need for "physical and ideological confrontation" and how opposition must be based on the working class. This shows at least a minimal awareness of class politics, but sadly, that is all there is. As a 'united front' made up of anarchists, Trotskyists, Red Action, Labour Party supporters and non-aligned individuals the political level of the AFA has to be kept at a deliberate low. AFA contains so many supporters of capitalism that it has never claimed to be a revolutionary organisation. It can only deal with the symptoms of fascism, whilst leaving the root cause, capitalism, untouched.

It is vital that the fascists in Britain be ideologically and physically countered. But any opposition to the fascists must be clearly anti-racist, anti-capitalist and anti-statist. Fascism springs from the soil of capitalism, a soil enriched with racist fertiliser. Any attempt to take on the fascists must talk about the widespread racism throughout society, institutionalised in the British state and its parts, the police, immigration service, courts and prisons.

MUSIC! MUSIC! MUSIC!

24 Track cassette 1.50 + p&p. Includes tracks from Doom, E.N.T. Hellkrusher, Embittered, Slander, Armed Relapse, Decontrol, Bone Idle, Forethought, Filthy Charity, and Nailbomb. Some of proceeds will go to ACF Press Fund. Orders through ACF, c/o 84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX.

From Panther to Anarchist

We continue our series on black nationalism, with a look at the Black Panthers and the Black American anarchists.

EIGHTEEN MONTHS AFTER the murder of Malcolm X, the Black Panther Party was formed in Oakland, California by two black nationalists — Huey Newton and Bobby Seale. Starting off by setting up armed patrols in Oakland that shadowed cop patrol cars, in three years they had set up 30 chapters, the largest of which, in Chicago, may have had a membership of 5,000 at its peak.

Essentially the Black Panther ideology was a mixture of black nationalism with a stiff dose of Marxist-Leninism, derived from Mao ZheDong and Castro. They saw themselves as a vanguard party. Yet they were significantly different from other Marxist-Leninist groups in their emphasis on the lumpenproletariat, the most degraded elements in capitalist society. In this they were at odds with Marx and Engels who had written in the *Communist Manifesto* of, "The 'dangerous' class, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society, may, here and there, be swept into the movement by a proletarian revolution; its conditions of life, however, prepare it far more for the part of a bribed tool of reactionary intrigue".

The Panthers strongly criticised the 'cultural nationalists' who advocated a return to Africa. One Panther militant referred to the Back-to-Africa line as "a bourgeois-capitalist scheme, to confuse the masses of people, so that they will not assault the city halls..."

White mother

The adoption of 'Marxist-Leninism' made the Panthers emphasise an anti-capitalist line. "We have two evils to fight, capitalism and racism. We must destroy both racism and capitalism." (Huey Newton, 1968). In one of their programmes they stated, "There must be a revolution in the white mother country, led by white radicals and poor whites, and national liberation in the black and third world colony here in America. We can't triumph in the colony alone because that is just like cutting one finger off a hand... No, when we deal with this monster we must deal with it totally". By summer 1969, the Panthers were referring to a general social revolution. "All members of the working class must seize the means of production. This, naturally, includes black people." By autumn, Newton was arguing that a separate black America of five or six states could not survive if the rest of the United States remained capitalist.

The Panthers had gone beyond black nationalism. Unfortunately, in going beyond it and looking for radical solutions, they were inevitably influenced by Marxist-Leninist ideology, at that time, in the late '60s and early '70s, at its most popular. They were among the most militant and combative black working class people in America, and this inevitably attracted the attention of the FBI. Between 1956 and 1971 it conducted a large scale Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) against black groups. They infiltrated the Panthers, and in early 1969 fired as many as 200 rounds into a Chicago apartment where Panthers were sleeping, killing one leading member and mortally wounding another. Prior to this, some 300 arrests were made on Panthers throughout Los Angeles, and raids were carried out on Panther offices across America.

Leadership

Along with the massive State repression unleashed against the Panthers, came the growth of the power of the leadership, and their increasing corruption and autocracy. In 1971 the Black Panther Party split in two. Newton designated himself the Supreme Commander, and any idea of collective decision-making was scrapped. This came with an increasing admiration for Stalin, Chief of Staff Hilliard stating, "We think that Stalin was very clear in this concept — that socialism could be implemented in one country, we say that it can be implemented in one community".

There was widespread dissatisfaction with the high-handedness and corruption of the leadership, in particular in New York and Los Angeles, as well as the exile section in Algiers. These dissidents were expelled from the Black Panther Party. They decided to take the path of élite armed action against the State. It was understandable that they should take this path, considering the high level of State repression, the Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of the leadership, and the failure to create effective links with other sections of the working class. A number of assassinations of cops, attacks on police stations and bank robberies were carried out by the newly formed Black Liberation Army. In the resulting counter-attacks by the State, over 20 were killed and 25 imprisoned.

Among those imprisoned was Kuwasi Balagoon. He had resisted racism whilst in military service, going on to become a tenant organiser in New York. He was one of the 'Panther 21' indicted in 1971. He went underground, staying there when all charges against the 21 were dropped in 1973, and working with the BLA. In prison he started to develop anarchist ideas, from his criticisms of bureaucracy

Above: Kuwasi Balagoon.

in the BPP. He influenced a number of other BLA prisoners, including Ojore N. Lutalo. He died of AIDS-related pneumonia in 1986.

Balagoon

Balagoon's anarchism was an important development in the black American working class. He rejected centralised party structures, and "replacing one ruling class with another...in the guise of a fairer boss or as a party". He saw that this was what separated "anarchist revolutionaries from Marxist, socialist and nationalist revolutionaries who from the onset do not embrace complete revolution. They cannot envision a truly free and equalitarian society and must to some extent embrace the socialisation process that makes exploitation and oppression possible in the first place".

Balagoon saw the need for mass organising, but failed to break with the concept of armed élite action, and still maintained some illusions in nationalism to the extent of stating, "It is beside the point whether Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano-Mexicano people choose nationalism as a vehicle for self-determination. As revolutionaries we must support the will of the masses". He failed to see that revolutionary anarchists must consistently argue against nationalism, and that often they are in a minority. "Supporting the will of the masses" can

Aims and principles

1. The Anarchist Communist Federation is an organisation of revolutionary class struggle anarchists. We aim for the abolition of all hierarchy, and work for the creation of a world-wide classless society: anarchist communism.

2. Capitalism is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class. But inequality and exploitation are also expressed in terms of race, gender, sexuality, health, ability and age, and in these ways one section of the working class oppresses another. This divides us, causing a lack of class unity in struggle that benefits the ruling class.

Oppressed groups are strengthened by autonomous action which challenges social and economic power relationships. To achieve our goal we must relinquish power over each other on a personal as well as a political level.

3. We believe that fighting racism and sexism is as important as other aspects of the class struggle. Anarchist-communism cannot be achieved while sexism and racism still exist. In order to be effective in their struggle against their oppression both within society and within the working class, women and black people may at times need to organise independently. However, this should be as working class women and black people as cross-class movements hide real class differences and achieve little for them. Full emancipation cannot be achieved without the abolition of capitalism.

4. We are opposed to the ideology of national liberation movements which claims that there is some common interest between native bosses and the working class in face of foreign domination. We do support working class struggles against racism, genocide, ethnocide and political and economic colonialism. We oppose the creation of any new ruling class.

We reject all forms of nationalism, as this only serves to redefine divisions in the international working class. The working class has no country and national boundaries must be eliminated. We seek to build an anarchist international to work with other libertarian revolutionaries throughout the world.

5. As well as exploiting and oppressing the majority of people, Capitalism threatens the world through war and the destruction of the environment.

6. It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without the use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.

7. Unions by their very nature cannot become vehicles for the revolutionary transformation of society. They have to be accepted by capitalism in order to function and so cannot play a part on its overthrow.

Trades unions divide the working class (between employed and unemployed, trade and craft, skilled and unskilled, etc). Even syndicalist unions are constrained by the fundamental nature of unionism.

The union has to be able to control its membership in order to make deals with management. Their aim, through negotiation, is to achieve a fairer form of exploitation of the workforce. The interests of leaders and representatives will always be different to ours.

The boss class is our enemy, and while we must fight for better conditions from it, we have to realise that reforms we may achieve today may be taken away tomorrow. Our ultimate aim must be the complete abolition of wage slavery. Working within the unions can never achieve this. However, we do not argue for people to leave unions until they are made irrelevant by the revolutionary event. The union is a common point of departure for many workers. Rank and file initiatives may strengthen us in the battle for anarchist-communism. What's important is that we organise ourselves collectively, arguing for workers to control struggles themselves.

8. Genuine liberation can only come about through the revolutionary self-activity of the working class on a mass scale.

An anarchist communist society means not only co-operation between equals, but active involvement in the shaping and creating of that society during and after the revolution.

In times of upheaval and struggle, people will need to create their own revolutionary organisations controlled by everyone in them. These autonomous organisations will be outside the control of political parties, and within them we will learn many important lessons of self-activity.

9. As anarchists we organise in all areas of life to try to advance the revolutionary process.

We believe a strong anarchist organisation is necessary to help us to this end. Unlike other so-called socialists or communists we do not want power or control for our organisation. We recognise that the revolution can only be carried out directly by the working class. However, the revolution must be preceded by organisations able to convince people of the anarchist communist alternative and method. We participate in struggle as anarchist communists, and organise on a federative basis. We reject sectarianism and work for a united revolutionary anarchist movement.

LETTERS

Dear *Organise!*

Did the Russian people vote for the sale of their most valuable (in capitalist eyes) resources to the world's richest industrial investors and exploiters of international labour? When will the next general election be held in Russia and will any political party be able to reverse the policies of the manic Thatcherite Boris Yeltsin? Will the Russian opposition form itself into a reformed communist party in the interests of the people's freedom and welfare?

These are the questions that the capitalist exploiters and their media puppets are not prepared to contemplate. From the start they sought only to destroy any form of communism whether elected by the vast majority or seized against fascist and capitalist forces on the battlefield. The only concern of a capitalist is to maintain the dictatorship of capital at all costs, and never be fooled by 'nice' little countries like Sweden, arms dealers and Third World exploiters like the rest of their kind.

A.A.(Edinburgh)

Organise! editors reply:

Several 'reformed' communist parties under various names and disguises have been *formed* already in Russia. Many of these have leaderships thoroughly compromised under the old Stalinist party structures. Others contain a new gang of careerists who want to make a living out of party politics. They have a variety of 'solutions' to offer, ranging from the old-fashioned dose of more Stalinism to the tasteless recipe of Labour Party style politics served up in an unappetising English sauce. The Russian working class must have no faith in any of these parties, but must organise themselves. Similarly having any illusions in elections to change anything forgets that the whole sorry mess of the market, brought in to replace the equally sorry mess of state capitalism (and not communism as you believe seemed to exist in the Soviet Union) was delivered up under the smoke-screen of 'democracy'.

Against exploitation

THE DEVELOPMENT OF class societies, which in ancient times replaced egalitarian societies throughout the world, were disastrous for the great mass of humanity.

Although there were often gains, in terms of increased productivity through improved communications etc, society became divided into haves and have nots. Class societies are based upon exploitation — the process by which the many provide for the greater well-being of the few.

The 'invention' of private property and the explosion of capitalism as the dominant economic system in the last few hundred years brought the process of exploitation to near perfection.

Exploitation under capitalism primarily means that workers are robbed by their employers of the full value of their efforts as expressed in value of the work they do. There is an irony here, since most employers look very seriously at pilfering. Robbery, it seems is OK for the bosses but not for the workers.

Only a portion of the wealth that workers create actually goes to them. The rest goes to the capitalist, forming the basis of profit which in turn leads to the building up of huge fortunes. Even quite small employers frequently leave in excess of one million pounds in their wills.

Marx

Karl Marx, despite any objections that anarchists might make about his centralism, statism, etc offered some useful insights into how exploitation occurs. Wealth, he pointed out, comes about when the raw materials provided by nature (wood, cotton, coal, etc) are transformed by labour using technology (tools, scientific processes, manufacturing techniques etc). The employer provides the necessary raw materials or part-finished goods, fuel, machines and premises which the worker uses in her or his daily labour. Incidentally, given that the idea of 'private property' is so deeply ingrained in the minds of ordinary people, the provision of factories and machines helps convince workers of the acceptability of their condition.

Workers produce, by using their intelligence, skill, and adaptability, products of a certain value, say £800 each per week, yet earns only £200 each. After other costs have been met, say another £200, the employer takes from the workers surplus value from each worker of £400. If in the workplace this is carried on many times over, then we can see how firms can make huge profits.

Profitability however, is based on the assumption that there is a demand for the products and that they can be sold. In times of recession this may not be possible. It is then that the workers become viewed as an economic liability and sacked, for the employer sees the worker's labour power as just one more commodity which has a price. As profits fall, fewer workers are needed and they are put on the scrap heap in such numbers as to restore profit levels.

Robbed

So, the workers are robbed day in, day out. Unfortunately, they are usually unaware of this. Many workers go along with the idea of 'a fair day's work for a fair day's pay'. In other words, there is an acceptance of the employer's right to manage, to expect hard work and the system of wage labour. Their exploitation is by and large invisible to them, though they may be aware of a sense of injustice.

Embrace

The workers, by and large, accept the capitalist economic approach of seeing themselves as a cost of production, rather than the main source of wealth. In doing so, they are unwittingly accepting the capitalist system. There are many reasons why workers embrace their exploitation. In part it is due to the persuasive power of education and the mass media but also, it is a result of trade unionism.

Trade unions accept capitalism. Their role is not to help bring about its destruction but to operate within it. In doing so they help promote capitalist exploitation. The unions try to improve wages and conditions, and in doing so accept management's right to manage and the employers right to profitability. The process of collective bargaining between workers and management is a recognition of the legitimacy of the system. In other words, at best, the unions pursue a 'fairer'(!) system of exploitation.

In addition, by dividing workers on the basis of craft, skill, industry and class, the unions are aiding the process of exploitation by undermining workers' solidarity. A divided working class is a weakened one. The pattern of exploitation is not an equal one. Where employers feel they have extra scope to extend the level of exploitation they will do so. For example young workers, immigrants and women for different reasons are vulnerable and subject to deep-seated cultural oppressions which are extended into the sphere of work. Despite so-called protective legislation women still earn a lot less than men, even when the work is of a similar character.

Unlike many Marxists who view the process of exploitation in so-called scientific terms anarchist communists find no room for such 'objectivity'. Capitalism is a system which is morally unjust, corrupting and degrading. The wages system which produces exploitation must be swept away in the movement to destroy capitalism.

As Kropotkin pointed out, all of the wealth of the world which has been produced over the centuries is the result of the efforts of all of humanity. This wealth must be restored to all of the people of the world — it belongs to no-one and everyone.